Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
Lyrasis Members and Sloan Foundation

http://www.archive.org/details/unfavorablerepor1865mary

[Document CC.]

BY THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES,
MARCH 22d, 1865.
Read and ordered to be printed.

UNFAVORABLE REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS,

ON THE BILL INCORPORATING THE

Baltimore, Annapolis and Washington Air Line Rail Road Company,

TO THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

ANNAPOLIS:
RICHARD P. BAYLY, PRINTER.
1865.

REPORT.

The committee on Ways and Means, to which was referred the bill to incorporate the Baltimore, Annapolis and Washington Air Line Railroad Company, respectfully report:

That being fully aware of the great importance of the subject, they were unwilling to determine finally upon their report, until they had heard the opinions of those in charge of the finances of the State, and until they had duly considered all the consequences of the proposed measure.

It is due to the House, that your committee should say, that after a full and careful consideration of the whole subject, they have determined to report against the bill, for the following reasons:

The bill authorizes the construction of a railroad from a point "on the south side of the city of Baltimore, not further west than the Spring Garden bridge, which shall run as near to the city of Annapolis as the inlets of the Chesapeake Bay will permit," and which shall be constructed from this uncertain point to the city of Washington.

Your committee cannot but perceive, from the nature of the country traversed by this route, that the proposed road must, of necessity, cross the Annapolis and Elkridge Railroad at some distance from the city of Annapolis. So certain, indeed, is this result to follow, that your committee is obliged to consider the proposed measure, simply as a plan for a new road from the point indicated, on the south side of the city of Baltimore to the city of Washington; and it is in this view that the measure must be considered by the House.

It is, however, impossible that your committee should confine itself to the consideration of the project, as a measure relating solely to the construction of a new railroad between Baltimore and Washington. Unless the proposed road were intended to form a connecting link with another line, it would prove of little practical value to the general interests, which, it has been asserted, it will promote. It is plain to your committee, that the object of the bill is to establish such a connection, and your committee is obliged to conclude that the purpose is to create a new route to Washington, via the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Northern Central Railroad.

The question is, whether this House is disposed to further such an object at this time.

The State of Maryland owns $3,891,200 in the main stem of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company; it owns $550,000 in the Washington Branch Road; the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, in which the State is so large a proprietor, owns $1,016,800 in the Washington Branch.—These interests are dependent upon each other for their value. The State derives a profit from its investment in the main stem, because, among other reasons, one branch of that main stem terminates at the National Capitol. It derives, among other reasons, a profit from the Washington Branch, because the main stem supplies that branch with so large an amount of trade and travel. The effect of a new road, not dependent in any way upon the work in which the State is interested, would be to divert, not only a large amount of trade and travel from the Washington Branch, in which the State is a great proprietor, but also to divert a large amount of trade and travel from the main stem of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, in which the State has also a large interest.

In the present financial condition of Maryland, your committee do not deem it expedient to hazard such a diminution, in the value of the investments of the State, or of the revenue derived from these sources. The Convention which formed the present Constitution, reserved the interest of the State in the Washington Branch Railroad from sale, while it authorized the Governor, Comptroller and Treasurer, to dispose of the interest of the State in other works of internal improvement. The policy which prohibited the sale of the interest of the State in the Washington Branch Railroad, would prove of little avail if the legislation of the State was so directed as to impair its value.

Your committee does not deem it necessary to vindicate the State of Maryland from the charge of closing all avenues to the capital, except that one which it has already authorized. This house has been a witness of the singular unanimity with which the construction of a railroad from the Point of Rocks to the city of Washington was authorized. And your committee feels assured that the new line, thus inaugurated, will prove, in connection with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and the Pittsburg and Connellsville Railroad, the most perfect additional route from the west to the National Capital which can be devised, or which the exigencies of the country can demand.

But while it is, in the judgment of your committee, proper that this House should, even at the sacrifice of the interests of some sections of the State, facilitate access to the National

Capital by new routes, when such seem to be demanded by the general interests of the nation, it is not proper that such interests should be sacrificed, when no national object can be gained, and no great and useful purpose be subserved.

Indeed, your committee cannot but remark that the bill submitted to its consideration, is calculated rather to impose a new burden upon inter-state commerce, for while the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company is authorized to charge not exceeding five (5) cents per ton per mile on its branch road to Washington, the company which it is proposed to charter by this bill, is authorized to charge 8 cents per ton per mile. And while the fare from Baltimore to Washington is now one dollar and a half for the 40 miles of distance between the two cities, the new company is authorized by the bill to charge six (6) cents per mile for a distance, necessarily longer than 40 miles, owing to the circuituous route, which the new road must take in following the line marked out by the proposed bill.

In conclusion, your committee need only state that up to the present hour, it has been abundantly demonstrated that the existing railroad between Baltimore and Washington, with its double track, and large means of transportation, is able to supply all the needs of the Government and of the traveling community. This it has done in seasons of extraordinary pressure, when it wat necessary to meet the greatest military exigencies. The means of communication, which have been thus ample in time of war, will prove more than sufficient on the return of peace. And your committee does not deem it expedient that the war should be made the pretext for making an unnecessary change in the railroad system, which this State has heretofore inaugurated.

Your committee feels that there is less necessity for pressing these views upon the House, because the House has already fully expressed its judgment upon the questions involved in this bill, and in kindred projects. When a bill, similar probably in purpose with that referred to your committee, was before the House of Representatives of the United States, the Senate and House of Delegates of Maryland, expressed their views unanimously upon the subject. Your committee, entertaining a clear opinion as to the object of the present bill, while it disclaims all purpose to identify citizens of Maryland, who choose to favor the plan of the new road, with the designs which the bill is intended to effect, deems it necessary only to quote to this House its own resolution, unanimously adopted at the present session, as a sufficient reason for the rejection of this bill.

"Be it resolved by the Senate and House of Delegates of Maryland, That we do hereby, in the name of the State of

UNIV. OF MD COLLEGE PARK

3 1430 03833067 8

JULY 75

N. MANCHESTER, INDIANA